



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **KC WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLING NEARLY \$100,000 FROM YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City, Mo., woman pleaded guilty in federal court today to embezzling nearly \$100,000 from two injury-prevention programs for youths in Jackson, Clay and Platte counties.

**Elaine M. Cummins**, 52, of Kansas City, waived her right to a grand jury and pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this morning to a federal information that charges her with program fraud.

**Cummins** was the program coordinator for the Young Traffic Offenders Program and the Think First Program from June 6, 1999, through May 27, 2003. The Young Traffic Offenders Program, Graves explained, consisted of one-day sessions, attendance at which was sometimes required as a condition of probation for young drivers convicted of traffic-related offenses in Jackson, Clay and Plate counties. The Think First Program presented speakers at local schools and other youth events. The speakers were individuals who had suffered spinal cord and head injuries as a result of irresponsible and dangerous behavior. The goal of the program, Graves explained, was to prevent spinal cord and head injuries by educating young people on the dangers of drunk driving, reckless behavior, and other irresponsible actions.

By pleading guilty today, Graves said, **Cummins** admitted that she embezzled \$98,068 from the two youth programs.

**Cummins** was responsible for developing programs, scheduling programs, hiring speakers, collecting and remitting fees from participants in the Young Traffic Offenders Program, submitting payroll and expense vouchers which resulted in checks being prepared for the speakers and presenters, and distributing payroll and expense checks.

Both programs were managed by The Research Foundation, a not-for-profit entity that received federal funding from the Department of Transportation – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in the form of grants passed through the Missouri Department of Public Safety – Division of Highway Safety. The Research Foundation, Graves added, was operated by Research Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo., through March 30, 2003, at which time it became an independent not-for-profit entity. During the three-year period from 2001 to 2003, Graves said, The Research Foundation received a total of \$185,286 in funding from the federal government.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for Feb. 24, 2004. Under federal statutes, **Cummins** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000 and an order of restitution. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda Parker Marshall. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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